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Testimony
In Support of

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, my name is Reagan Paul, and I proudly represent the people of House District 37. Thank you for the opportunity to present my bill LD 601, *“An Act to Remove State-imposed Referendum Requirements Regarding Nuclear Power.”* This bill is a necessary step in modernizing Maine’s energy policy by eliminating outdated, arbitrary restrictions that prevent the state from even considering nuclear power as part of our energy future.

The Need for Reform

Maine’s current law requires a statewide referendum before any new nuclear power plant or nuclear waste facility can be constructed, and the same goes for interstate nuclear compacts. This requirement, unique in its unnecessary and overly burdensome nature, effectively serves as a blanket prohibition on nuclear energy in Maine.

Energy policy decisions should be made based on facts, scientific advancements, and economic considerations—not determined through costly, politically-charged statewide referenda that discourage investment and delay progress. LD 601 seeks to align Maine with the many states that allow energy development to be regulated through expert agencies and legislative oversight, rather than direct voter referenda that do not apply to any other form of energy infrastructure.

Energy Independence and Affordability

Maine families and businesses are struggling under the weight of some of the highest electricity costs in the country. Up to 30% of our energy supply is dependent on expensive imports from other states and from Canada, which as we’ve seen, can be highly unpredictable based on current international trade relations.

Nuclear energy provides a stable, affordable, and long-term solution to Maine’s energy needs. Unlike intermittent renewable sources like wind and solar, nuclear power offers consistent, around-the-clock power without the volatility of fossil fuel markets. If we are serious about energy affordability and reliability, we must remove barriers that prevent us from even considering nuclear power as a viable option.

Environmental and Economic Benefits

District 37 Frankfort, Prospect, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Winterport

Modern nuclear power is among the safest, most efficient, and most environmentally friendly energy sources available today. Unlike wind and solar, which require significant land use and infrastructure expansion, nuclear produces near zero emissions while generating large amounts of power from a compact footprint. It is the only carbon-free energy source that can reliably meet base-load electricity demand without requiring backup fossil fuel generation, or the buildout of excess storage.

Furthermore, nuclear energy would provide high-paying jobs and local economic growth in Maine, with nuclear workers earning 50% more than those working related to other energy sources. The construction, operation, and maintenance of a nuclear facility would create skilled labor opportunities, benefiting our workforce while reducing our dependence on energy imports. Our state has made it clear on many occasions that reducing our overall emissions is a major policy goal, and nuclear is the most effective way to pursue that.

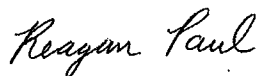
Maine Must Keep Pace with Other States

Across the country, states are recognizing the role of nuclear technology in achieving energy security and sustainability. States such as Connecticut, Illinois, and Wisconsin have recently removed outdated restrictions on nuclear development, paving the way for nuclear energy industry growth. Maine, however, is falling behind because of an antiquated referendum requirement that discourages industry leaders from even considering our state for nuclear projects. By passing LD 601, we signal to investors, innovators, and energy experts that Maine is open to 21st-century energy solutions, not shackled by policies written for a past era.

Conclusion

Maine's energy future should be driven by innovation, economic opportunity, and affordability—not unnecessary political obstacles. LD 601 does not mandate nuclear power in Maine; it simply removes an unnecessary barrier that prevents us from even developing logical and beneficial energy projects.

I urge this committee to pass LD 601 and allow Maine to improve its energy production, lower costs for consumers, and remain competitive in the evolving energy landscape. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Reagan Paul
State Representative